

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-14 and 16 are present in this application. By this Amendment, the Abstract of the Disclosure, the specification and claims 1, 2, 9, 11 and 16 have been amended, and claim 15 has been canceled. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The disclosure was objected to due to several informalities. With regard to the description with respect to one side of the mechanism, as would be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art, only one side has been described because the other side is an exact mirror copy. Each side of the vehicle, left and right, has a five-bar mechanism that includes a pothole protection bar. Both of these mechanisms are actuated by the actuator (24) that is connected or secured to the lifting section. The specification has been amended to recite that the mechanism 20 is described with respect to one side only.

With regard to the vehicle frame 12 and the connector 40 comprising bars in the five-bar mechanism, the specification clearly provides that the frame or chassis 12 provides a ground for the mechanism. A fundamental tenet of mechanical engineering counts the ground as a bar of a mechanism. A discussion of this concept is provided in an engineering textbook entitled, "Design of Machinery: An Introduction to the Synthesis and Analysis of Mechanisms and Machines," authored by Robert L. Norton.

With regard to the connector 40, the specification describes that the connector may be pivoted to the vehicle frame 12 (see, e.g., paragraph [0024]). By envisioning the connector as a link pivoted to the frame, perhaps the Examiner can better understand its use as a link in the five-bar mechanism. In one embodiment, however, as shown in the drawings, similar functionality is

achieved by a connector fixed to the frame including a slot therein such that the crank can only translate with respect to the connector and slot and can only rotate with respect to the frame.

Finally, with regard to the specification as defining the five-bar mechanism as actuating the pothole protection bar and also counting the pothole protection bar as one of the elements in the five-bar mechanism, the specification has been amended herein to describe that the five-bar mechanism actuates the pothole protection mechanism.

Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The claims have been amended herein to be consistent with the corrections to the specification discussed above. Applicants respectfully submit that those of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that the vehicle frame 12 and connector 40 are appropriate elements of the five-bar mechanism. Additionally, the claims have been amended to recite that the five-bar mechanism actuates the pothole protection mechanism. Applicants thus respectfully submit that the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, have been satisfied. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,425,459 to Keefer. Without conceding this rejection, claim 15 has been canceled. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 1-14 and that claim 16 is allowed.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are patentable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place the

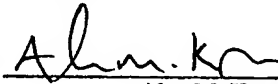
SANNAH et al
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application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants'
undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Prompt passage to issuance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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